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ALUMNI ANNIVERSARY
OF
COLUMBIA COLLEGE,
NEW-YORK.

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED
IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL,

4TH OCTOBER, 1837.

BY JOHN McVICKAR, D.D.,
PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, COLUMBIA COLLEGE.



NEW-YORK :
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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES
OF THE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

NEW-YORK, WEDNESDAY EVENING,
October 4th, 1837.

ON motion of GULIAN C. VERPLANCK, Esq.,

Resolved, That the thanks of this Association be presented to the Rev. Professor McVICKAR, for the very able and eloquent address just delivered by him, and that a committee be appointed by the chair to request from him a copy for publication ; and, also, to superintend the publication of the same.

Gulian C. Verplanck, Thomas W. Wells, and William Inglis, Esquires, were appointed as the above committee.

G. M. HILLYER, *Secretary*.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN, ALUMNI OF COLUMBIA COLLEGE :

IN accepting the invitation of your committee to address you on this Anniversary, it had been my hope to find leisure for preparation during our usual college recess. In the providence of God, those hours of anticipated leisure came not; they were filled with nearer and more painful duties, and I consequently am forced to appear now before you with a haste of preparation little worthy, I acknowledge, of the honour you have done me. The past may indeed furnish me with some appropriate remembrances, and the future with some suggestions; though it may well be that over both will be cast a shadow, more in accordance with the feelings of the speaker than those he is called to address.

The occasion on which we meet is one not only usually but rightfully devoted to joyous recollections. This day at least memory meets us, as fancy paints her, "with hands full of flowers." The scenes and sports of boyhood—the associated studies of youthful friends—the recurrence of that

eventful day when "brothers part for manhood's race;" the reunion, on this consecrated "green," of those whom life and its duties have so long exiled from its peaceful shades, and who on this day return to it with the devotion of pilgrims circling around the ark of their youth, or rather, with the gayer feelings of childhood, gathering roses from the home of their infancy,—these are touching and sacred thoughts; they come home to our best feelings,—they awaken our purest emotions; and cold must be the heart, and false the philosophy, that would for one moment seek to deaden them,—far, very far be from me such intention.

But, out of this fountain of sweet waters there sometimes is found to eddy forth a bitter stream. Regrets spring up within the bosom for what time has robbed us of, and we look back to those happy days with somewhat the same sickness of heart, as the tossed mariner does towards the peaceful shore from which the tempest has driven him.

Now this, gentlemen, is a thought alike false and dangerous. Not only does it attribute to youth a felicity it had not, but it impeaches alike the goodness of Providence, and the high destinies of our nature, by giving a preference to thoughtless enjoyment over rational happiness. With sensitive spirits, such day-dreams indulged embitter life, and, even with the sternest, they tend to lower the moral tone of thinking, and to enfeeble the vigour of present action.

Youth and its pre-eminent pleasures are the poet's theme, not the moral teacher's. As men and Christians, we are called to a higher judgment, and must weigh pleasure in other scales. But are they not also, I would ask, the poet's *dream*? Memory, we must remember, is not always the stern painter;—her scenes are distant; her tints aerial; her pencil flattering;—and thus she lends enchantment to many a rugged and toilsome path. She recalls the laugh of boyhood, but hides the tear—brings before us the sunshine or the shade of some holiday hour, but covers up the irksome task that made so sweet such idleness.

It is one of the anomalies of our nature, that in comparing the present with the past, man always overrates his knowledge and underrates his happiness. The one comparison he answers with a smile of derision; the other, with a sigh of regret—wrongly perhaps in both. He has gained less and lost less with the advance of years, than he himself thinks for. At any rate, it cannot be denied, that our truest enjoyments came in our youth from the same sources as they come now, and that from fountains which years have deepened instead of closing: from the conscious satisfaction that attends the performance of duty—from the virtuous exercise of our social and benevolent affections, and from the dedication of our powers to high and worthy pursuits. Now, as these have matured and strengthened, it is not possible that our best pleasures can have failed.

The thoughtless gaiety of youth (if that is any thing more than a vision of fancy) may have past; but it were treason to our better nature, to weigh that feather of childhood against the golden treasures of reason, virtue and religion, which enrich our maturer years.

To the virtuous youth, no doubt, college years were happy. It was virtue made them such; but, then, pleasure for pleasure, virtuous manhood has within its reach higher and deeper enjoyments; and when these, too, pass from us with the current of years, religion opens to us in the future a brighter vision than was ever painted on the clouds of the past—a vision, too, not fading as that does into shadowy distance, but growing brighter and brighter unto reality.

Entrance on a college life is to the schoolboy like a step upwards in the scale of creation; and he looks down on the path he has left with some such feeling of proud contempt as we might suppose the new-fledged butterfly to feel toward its former grovelling condition. Nor is this sentiment altogether a childish one; it springs out of that self-respect which in every period of life lies at the foundation of character. The boy from that day has become a man; he has quitted the dominion of the rod; he has come under the rule of motives, and as he subscribes his name in the College Register, in pledge of a *willing* obedience, he feels himself clothed with a new dignity—even that of a free agent, responsible, self-governed.

Under this exciting as well as solemnizing conviction, I well remember to have first entered these college walls, thirty-seven years ago. The building then consisted only of the original pile, and that in a very dilapidated state, and the majestic trees which now overshadow us, were then but in their middle growth. Yet, alas, for the recollections of boyhood ! the college edifice seemed to me more extended and vast, and the trees far loftier and more venerable than they do now ; and the dark confined hall in which we were gathered for examination, more imposing than any I have entered since. How much of all this feeling arose from dread of the trial that awaited candidates within it, it were not easy to say,—certainly not a little ; for the initiatory college examinations were then understood to be peculiarly strict, and certainly, to such scholars as the most of us were, an ordeal not a little to be dreaded. The adoption, too, of individual rank throughout the class, and its subsequent publication, both within and without the college walls, excited to the uttermost the fears of the timid, and the hopes of the confident and aspiring. It was, in truth, the commencement of a system of competition, soon running into rivalry among the members of our class, that terminated but with our four years college course, and one to which I confess I now look back with condemnation for its final influences. The praise generally accorded to this system is that of awakening youthful intellect. Even were this granted, the

question would not be settled, for education has higher aims ; but, it may well be doubted whether in its operation it does not deaden far more intellect than it enkindles, by depressing the timid, discouraging those imperfectly prepared, and trampling, I may say, upon the feeble. It stamps upon the slow mind the charge of dulness, and under that condemnation, consigns the sensitive youth to despair, and hardier ones to recklessness of all improvement. Now, not only do these in their variety constitute the *οι πολλοι* so that the good of the many is sacrificed to the few ; but out of them, too, rise up often, in after life, our best and most influential citizens. The “early ripers” of college lose their pre-eminence, while the slow and mature thinkers ripen into the great and strong minds of the community. As an illustration of such a mind, I would venture to name our own great WASHINGTON: the deliberativeness, not to say the slowness, of whose mental operations was equally remarkable with the soundness of his eventual judgments. In such intellectual race as we were called to run,—a race that was to be won by speed, having competition for the motive, and the palm of victory for the reward,—he would doubtless have been distanced by many ; while, as we well know, in the race of true glory, where life was the course, and duty the motive, and conscious virtue the prize, we need not fear to say he has distanced the world.

Nor is the evil of such competition only to the vanquished ; they who enjoy its heartless triumphs are too often destined to feel the withering influence of victories prematurely gained, and ambition, unduly, if not unholily excited. I speak not now of the sorrows of the ambitious student, of the feverish excitement—the sleepless anxiety—the disappointed hopes—the galling sense of inferiority—or the still more bitter feeling of unmerited wrong—all which wither while they stimulate the overgraded mind : I speak not now of these as sorrows ; for in so far as they are such, time heals them over, and they are, or may be, safely forgotten ; but I speak of them as habits of mind induced upon character at a period when character itself is formed. In this point of view they make wounds that time does not heal, and give a bent to the mind from which it is apt never to recover. Upon the man they leave an impress of the feverish and excitable boy ; they colour life with all the fretful hues of rivalry, and too often, in weaker minds, assuming the malignant type of envy, *eat in* upon the living energies of heart and intellect. But take the fairest prospect. Look at the ambitious youth as he enters upon the world, with all the excitement of successful competition fresh upon him. He has been trained to a race which the wise and good are not called to run,—the race of rivalry ; and when he comes to enter on the quiet course of duty, he flags for want of excitement ; he looks round for praise, and finding none,

sinks like the artificial swimmer, whose buoying bladders have been suddenly taken from under him.

Such is the penalty paid by the youth who has been formed upon a rule of action taken from without —“*Opinione justi, opinione tantum beati.*”—Hence it is that these hothouse plants of competition fail so often to take hold on the common soil of life ; and hence too, the equally frequent observation, that the best fruits of education, the firm, resolute and cheerful mind, the clear head, the tranquil nerve and ready hand, belong mostly to men whose youth has been nurtured upon a calmer but more abiding principle of action, **THE INWARD SENSE OF DUTY.**

In giving this picture, gentlemen, I have spoken freely my convictions, as being the result of many years experience in conducting or watching the great process of education. Within the twenty years of my academic charge, many an ardent and sensitive youth have I known, thus broken down at his very outset in life, by exhaustion or disappointment, induced by such false training ; and I need not add, how painful it has been to see those aspirants after fame stumble and fall at the very threshold of the temple, whom nature and fortune seemed alike to have fitted for reaching and adorning its highest pinnacles.* But such instances must be

* It is proper to add, that the system here condemned in the college, was subsequently abandoned. The one now pursued, by adopting the alphabetic

present to the memory of all; and I would now recall them to the minds of the Alumni, only in order to gain their sanction to the strengthening within our college, of that department of study which presses home upon the mind its truest and noblest stimulant—in the language of the best teacher of morals, *οὐκ ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ τῷ Θεῷ ἀρεσκεῖν*.*

But to return to college recollections.—The class of which I had the honour to be a member, long prided itself upon being the most numerous that had ever entered these college walls. Of late years it has had the further boast, of being among those most fully represented in these interesting “reunions.” But time is fast thinning our ranks.—Within a few months two of our number have dropped from us; one at home, the other, my earliest antagonist for college honours in the gladiatorial arena, in a land of strangers.—“*Sic transit.*”

Among the college professors of our day, was one whose name, however familiar to you, has failed hitherto in having his academical merits as prominently brought before the alumni, as have been those of his more learned, perhaps, and scientific associates. I mean the Rev. Dr. Bowden, who had charge of the moral and literary course.

arrangement, except in the case of the two highest students, and throwing open each department to independent honours, avoids the concentrated rivalry of the old system, and leaves the mind more free to nobler impulses. Neither would the writer be misunderstood as utterly condemning all emulation—a principle thus implanted in our nature, can be evil only in its abuse.

* 1. Thess. ii. 4. *ὡς ἔκ ἀνθρώποις ἀρεσκοντες ἀλλὰ τῷ Θεῷ τῷ δογμαζόντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν.*

That deficiency of notice, so far at least as academic character is concerned, I would gladly now in some measure supply ; not only, as looking upon such record (to use the words of old Izaak Walton) “as an honour due to the dead, and a generous debt to those that live and come after us,” but more especially, as thinking that I owe to his memory more than the ordinary debt of a student’s gratitude ; since not only as a pupil did I love and reverence him, but subsequently, as a friend and brother in the ministry, I esteemed and admired him ; and lastly, as the immediate successor to his duties in the college when death removed him, I am enabled to appreciate, more justly than others, both the difficulties he surmounted and the value of what he effected.

The early life of the Rev. Dr. John Bowden had been one of incident, as his middle life was of many trials. His father, Thomas Bowden, was an officer, though I know not of what rank, in his Britannic Majesty’s 46th regiment of foot. This regiment, which afterwards did good service in the old French war in this country, was, at the time of his birth, (Jan. 7, 1751,) stationed in Ireland, where his mother also was. His early boyhood was therefore passed in that country ; though he soon followed his father to the colonies, under the charge of a clergyman of the church of England. His classical studies now commenced, and after due preparation, he was entered of Princeton College, N. J. But a soldier’s life was unfavourable to a settled home ; and after

two years academic study, he was again called to follow the fortunes of his father, who was returning to England with his regiment. In the year 1770, at the age of nineteen, he crossed, for the third time, the Atlantic, and on his arrival in this city, immediately presented himself as a candidate for entrance into this (King's) college, under the presidency of the Rev. Dr. Cooper, where he graduated with the usual honours, in 1772, being one of a small class of six, who had enjoyed in their classical studies the able instructions of the president, an Oxford scholar, and fellow of Queen's College.

Upon the completion of his college course, native piety, or the advice of friends, turned his thoughts to the ministry; and after the usual period of study, he proceeded to England for orders in 1774, together with his friend, the late Bishop Benj. Moore, of this diocese, and was ordained deacon by Dr. Keppel, and priest by Dr. Terrick of London. Returning in the autumn of the same year, the two young friends were simultaneously elected assistant ministers of Trinity Church in this city. The early friendship thus commenced was subsequently long tried, and terminated but with death. It was between congenial and worthy minds, and withstood not only all ordinary causes of decay or estrangement, but, what with inferior spirits cuts deepest, marked inequality in professional success and worldly prosperity. Mr. Bowden's establishment in Trinity Church seemed now to give him promise of a per-

manent home. But war again broke in—the revolutionary struggle ensued—the city churches were shut up, and the clergy scattered. Dr. Bowden retired to Norwalk, in Connecticut; and although he again for a short time returned to this city, yet increasing weakness of voice eventually confirmed him in his choice of a country parish; and he accordingly continued to labour in the retired village he had first chosen, until the year 1789. By the advice of physicians, he now resolved on a removal to a warmer climate, and accordingly accepted the charge of a small parish in the island of St. Croix. Finding his general health, after two years' residence, rather debilitated than strengthened, he again returned to Connecticut, making his home at Stratford. In 1795 he accepted the charge of the Episcopal academy at Cheshire, and there laboured until called to the more arduous, yet at the same time more comfortable station, of professor in Columbia College. This last change took place in the year 1801, and closed the long list of removals in his painfully changeful life.

At the time our class came under his charge, Dr. B. was, therefore, in the 50th year of his age—though a stranger's estimate would probably have added some eight or ten years to that number, from the deep furrows which sickness or sorrow, or perhaps both, had left upon his strongly marked countenance. His figure, though somewhat stooping, was still commanding; and his general air retained

(so at least it seemed to boyish eyes) a good deal of the military manner, to which we understood that in earlier years he had been accustomed; not only as the son of a British officer, but having himself held a chaplaincy in the army.

His appearance and demeanour were such as became the academic teacher: tranquil, grave and reflecting, with a countenance strongly marked by traces of thought, but still more expressive of the moral traits of character, of benignity, firmness and conscientiousness. The impression, on the whole, was that of a man of great resolution, gentleness and piety.

*Compositum jus, fasque animo sanctosque recessus,
Mentis et incoctum generoso pectus honesto.*

Or, to give the picture in a version which surpasses, perhaps, the original,

*Conscience and law in moral bond combined,
The pure recesses of a holy mind,
And honour's self within the generous heart enshrined.*

To this general expression, his eye greatly contributed; it was large, open and decided, notwithstanding a little nervous trembling of the lid, and a strong cast of melancholy, which it retained even in its sternest moods. It was, in short, such an eye and expression as a conscientious student would feel himself most powerfully rebuked by, for it never failed to awaken self-condemnation. His voice accorded well with this picture. Though

greatly broken, so as to be oftentimes painfully tremulous, there yet ran through all its feeble and discordant notes, an under current, as it were, of firmness and sweetness, that made it on the whole impressive, and I might add, far from unpleasing. This was particularly to be noted in that for which he would have seemed disqualified, rhythmical reading, which often came before the class, from his frequent quotation of the poets in his delivered lectures. In this, such was the influence of good taste, his manner was so simple, his sense of the beauties of the passage so sincere, and his broken tones so genuine and heartfelt, that even his defective utterance came in for its share of power; it created with us the illusion which Horace recommends, "*the fiendum ipsi tibi;*" we believed that the reader's own feelings were overcome, and ours (I speak at least for one of his hearers) followed of course. On such occasions, it was a pleasing sight to see him surrounded, at the close of the lecture, with a crowd of eager applicants, each seeking, with glowing cheek and glittering eye, the privilege of a first copy of what they had listened to with so great admiration.

It is true that as a disciplinarian he held lightly the staff of authority; he leaned rather on what he no doubt often found to be a broken reed—his own well-founded claims to respect and affection. Yet in this matter let us do justice to both teacher and pupil. It is in discipline, as in most other things, the true value is not always to be judged by its first results,

and more especially in the prosecution of studies that bear upon character.

When the subject of attainment in the lecture-room is some present immediate result of memory and attention, then no doubt the memory and attention of the student are an accurate measure of his improvement, and that is the best discipline which directs itself to those faculties alone; but when the object to be attained by instruction is rather moral than intellectual, to awaken, for instance, the native powers of taste, or to deepen the conscientious feelings of our nature, it is not surely then the rod of the pedagogue or the eye of the martinet that is most effective to that end. The lesson then to be learned is one that the heart must comprehend before the memory can retain it; or rather, it is not so much a lesson to be acquired, as it is an impression to be received, and the wax must be softened before it can be moulded. At any rate, whatever it be, it is something in which a word of kindness that sinks into the heart, a parental rebuke, that comes back to the memory in some hour of reflection, go further to effect what, in such studies, it is really intended to effect, than rules of order that can never be broken, or an authority before which the pupil obeys and trembles. Such, at least, is the conviction of one who, in these studies, was first awakened to thought by such parental training, and who, in now looking back to Dr. Bowden's instructions, feels that he owed to him something beyond the cultivation

either of memory or intellect. His words were those of a wise and good man; pregnant with instruction beyond the breath in which they were uttered. They sank into the tender soil of youth like seeds, to grow up at some future hour; and it may be, that the fairest fruits of conscientious industry, which the pupils of such a professor have brought forth in after years, might be traced, could we view the inner workings of the mind, to those words of kind encouragement or christian rebuke, that then seemed to fall on the ear unheeded. Such things may be—"επεα πτερόεντα"—words are "winged things," and fly, we know not how far. It is, too, in the moral, as in the vegetable world, the giant of the forest grows up from an acorn, which a bird from the hill drops in his flight; so too, no doubt, is oftentimes the germ of the patriot and the Christian first awakened to life within the bosom, by some chance word, which love dictates and sorrow sharpens. This it is, in the words of holy writ, to "cast our seed upon the waters," and after many days, to find it.

Such is the picture which grateful memory draws of a professor who trained his students by the united bands of reason and kindness; who counted self-respect a safer principle of action within their bosoms, than rivalry with others; and who deemed himself successful in attaining the great end of his instructions, when he had touched the hearts of his students by the sense of the beautiful, or awaken-

ed their moral vision to the perception and admiration of the fair and the good; but most of all, when he saw, by the willing endeavour, or the repentant tear, that he had struck the inward fountain of SELF-PROMPTING DUTY. Though it sprung forth at the time but as a trickling rivulet, over which the child might wade and scarce wet his foot, he yet recognised in it the head and well-spring of that mighty river of conscientious endeavour, which, flowing forth from the awakened heart to gladden life wherever it runs, deepens and widens as it goes, till no man can fathom its depths, or count up the treasures it bears upon its bosom.

These, gentlemen, are plants of discipline, which fade not with the academic contest. They are nurtured for the real struggle to which life calls us. They go to make not the scholar only, but the man and the Christian; and being rooted in the native soil of the heart, require nothing more than the refreshing dews of heaven, to bring forth, and continue to bring forth, so long as life endures, the sweet and wholesome fruits of peace and a good conscience.

Such was Dr. Bowden at the time of my earlier remembrance of him. For thirteen years subsequently, he thus continued to labour—bearing up against increasing infirmity and repeated affliction, with that Christian courage he sought to infuse into the hearts of his pupils;—and if it be counted praise for the wounded warrior to fall with his armour on,

“miles gladio cinctus,”—let not the like meed be withheld from the Christian teacher, who continued to fulfil, amid sickness and sorrow, to the very last hours of life, the high and responsible duties of his calling; rising above all selfish fears in devotion to the best interests of those intrusted to his care.

He died July 31, 1817, at Ballston Springs, to which place he had retired on the close of the session. He there lies interred, with a tablet, gratefully erected to his memory by the trustees of this college.—Were I called to inscribe on it his academic eulogium, it should be,

Εν φιλοσοφῳ σχηματι το Θειον διδασκων.

In pursuance of these serious thoughts, permit me, gentlemen Alumni, to suggest for your consideration, whether our association may not propose to itself some higher aim than the mere awakening, on one passing day, of transient, however cordial, college recollections. We say, and say truly, that to our Alma Mater we owe a debt of gratitude. Let us bethink ourselves whether we cannot repay it, and throw back, as honourable minds love to do, the weight of obligation.

There is, too, resting on us a debt of humanity, which each generation owes to that which comes after it, to do its share towards leaving the world wiser and better than it found it. But what with others is only a common debt, with us has become a specific obligation. Our country appeals

to us as citizens ; but it is our college that entreats us, as her children, not willingly to pass away from the labours of life, without doing something to smooth the path of ascent for those who are to follow us. But how, it may be asked, shall this be done, and wherein does our college course need enlargement ? On this point, permit me to recall to you what has been already said as to the value of making the sense of duty the moving principle of education, and to suggest whether, among our students, that sense may not be made more operative, by leading them to drink deeper of the pure fountain from which it flows. Had we been asked, when collegians, what department of study should be strengthened, our answers would doubtless have been as various as the departments themselves. The mathematician would have been for diving deeper into the exhaustless mine of analysis ; the natural philosopher, for expatiating more widely amid the boundless fields of nature ; while the scholar, the orator and the economist, would each have had his own claim and unanswerable argument. An equal diversity of choice would doubtless have been found among us during our subsequent years of professional study and pursuit, and as before, inclination, so now our peculiar business would have dictated the preference. But how, I would ask, is it in after years ? As age advances, do we not approximate in opinion ? As we are called to grapple with "life's more instant business," and

its trials or its sorrows bring forth our energy or our weakness, do we not then begin to recognise in education a new and more distant, yet higher end, and appreciate that as its most valuable result, which we find has enabled us to sustain manfully the sterner struggle of life? Gentlemen, I think we do. As experience adds wisdom, and gray hairs bring reflection, we all come to see life, and that which fits us for it, in the same light. Step by step our estimate of the intellectual falls back upon the moral, while the moral itself falls back and bases itself upon religion. Our first views, for instance, made worldly success dependent upon attainments; experience shows it to be more the result of character, of probity, honour, truth, and unblemished morals. Our early anticipations of happiness brought it from without; we soon find that its true sources are within, and that, rather in the heart than the head: in the habits, tastes and affections that education has implanted, and self-government nurtured and strengthened. But there is a yet deeper lesson of life, which throws us back upon religion, and makes us feel the inadequacies of all education that has not laid its foundation there. We began with labouring for the world, never doubting *its* value. What shall we do when our chief treasure has been "weighed in the balance and found wanting." Our tears of aspiring ambition were dried by victory; but the question now is, what shall dry the tears of the victor?

Earthly weights we may move by the lever that science furnishes; but where shall set our fulcrum when earth itself is the weight? *Δος ποῦ στω*—"Tell me where I shall stand." Reason and conscience can teach us the path of duty; but the question is, what shall strengthen us to walk in it, or restore him to it who has once fallen from its lofty and narrow path? This is a new problem, yet one that life soon brings before every reflecting mind, and that must be solved to give peace. But how? what course of study has fitted us for its solution? modern analysis cannot reach it; natural philosophy knows nothing of it; the Utilitarian scheme cannot even comprehend it; the sages of Greece and Rome, while they saw it, acknowledged their ignorance; they could but state the problem, and with Socrates or Cicero exclaim, "*oh præclarum diem*"—"oh happy day" that shall bring forth Him who shall answer it. There is, gentlemen, but one department of study that makes it to us a problem neither fearful nor insoluble, and that is, the thorough rational settlement in our minds of the truth of revelation.

Now, what shall we say of a course of education that leaves the mind unfurnished in this emergency? Are we justified in calling that education a sufficient one: nay, are we justified in calling it education at all, if it have fitted the man neither for his hardest trials nor his highest duties? In the decision of reason, we surely are not. Edu-

cation, without religion to bind it, is to the eye of reason, an arch without its key-stone—a race without a goal—a voyage without a port. The golden colours of the evening cloud that fade with the setting sun, are but a just image of the transitivity of all intellectual glory that recognises not God as its author and its end. So necessarily, indeed, does religion grow out of man's nature—so rooted is it in his necessities, and so identified with his best affections, that the mind which grows up without it becomes *unhinged*; its moral speculations have no starting point; its physical ones, no end. The link is broken that binds together thought and action—the visible and the invisible; and the mind wanders through its sphere as we might suppose some planet to do, cast loose from its central sun. To the reflecting mind, all the other attainments which education can give, whether of learning, art, science or taste, all appear, without this crowning perfection, but as scattered materials for some noble structure, yet unbuilt; and if life proceed without its erection, they then fill the mind of the observer not so much with admiration as with sorrow, as he thinks of the glorious temple they might have formed, and were destined to form, to the honour of Him whose wisdom, and power, and beauty, and goodness, are so manifestly displayed even in its scattered fragments.

To know and feel this truth in its true force, belongs not to the youthful student; but we who do

know and feel it, are we not bound by every tie of high and holy charity—by every consideration of gratitude and duty, to reflect back that light which years have given us, in order that they who follow us in the path of life, may be wise through our experience, and that future Alumni may have reason to bless the hands that have lighted for them in youth the lamp of life? Nor let it be said that years will teach them soon enough the vanity of the world and the need of religion. It is not, gentlemen, the vanity of the world, but the remedy for that vanity that it is proposed to teach them; and not the need of religion, but the truth and the possession of it. This is a different lesson, and one that years no more necessarily teach to the irreligious mind, than the storms of the ocean teach the ignorant landsman the science of navigation. It is the words of a holy Father: “true wisdom must be sought after during the tranquillity of peace. We cannot expect to find places of shelter in a storm, which we did not look for when it was calm.”* In whatever light, then, we view religion, whether as a question of truth, that the mind may be settled in it, or as a rule of action, that the habits may be formed on it, or as a matter of feeling, that the heart may be rooted in it, it is still equally essential that it be incorporated into the course of education. It is a lesson, which, to be well learned, must be early learned. In the lan-

* St. Augustine.

guage of an old divine of the Church of England, a church which has set to the Christian world the noblest example of reasonable faith, "man is not at all settled or confirmed in his religion, until his religion is the self-same thing with the reason of his mind, that when he speaks reason, he speaks religion, and when he speaks religiously he speaks reasonably."* Now, gentlemen, if such be our convictions, let us act upon them, and no longer leave our educated sons to grow up, rich in science, but beggars in this better knowledge. Let us, at least, lay the foundation of Christian truth in their minds, by their being well instructed in the "evidences of natural and revealed religion." 'Tis true, our statutes have recently recognised this study as part of the senior course; but being thrown on an already overloaded professorship, it is evident it cannot receive the time and attention it deserves. Let, then, our college circuit be enlarged by a lectureship, devoted specifically to this end, bearing the name of "Alumni" for its founders, and the truth of the Bible as its especial subject, and embracing, at the shortest, the two closing years of the sub-graduate course. Such an endowment were a worthy boon for us to bestow on the Institution we this day delight to honour. Not only would it cancel our debt, but make our college, our country and posterity our debtors; since, for every youth whose otherwise unplanted

*Withcote, as quoted by Alexander Knox in his Remains.

mind should thus receive within it the seeds of the tree of life, our Alma Mater would doubtless be indebted to us for one faithful son, our country for one good citizen, and those who come after us for one more Christian example.

In no portion of Christendom, let us remember, is a provision for such study so imperiously required, either for private virtue or public safety, as in our Utilitarian republic. In the old world, each rising generation is moulded by that which precedes it, and Christian parents beget Christian children: with us, the rising generation claim to be left "*sui juris*," free and untrammelled in all their opinions. Under the more patriarchal governments of the old world, religion is the care of the state, and Christianity is therefore impressively exhibited, as well as authoritatively taught; the result of which is, that the Christian faith becomes early consecrated in the mind by all those associations of outward reverence and ancient usage, which mould the opinions of youth long before the exercise of reason, and are thus, in a great measure, a substitute for that direct religious instruction to which we alone can look. In our country, on the contrary, whether for good or ill, we have no such preventive guards against infidelity—no common mould of national Christianity; no pervading atmosphere of a people's piety; nothing, in short, to forestall or circumscribe that wild license of ignorant and capricious choice in matters of religion, which is so often falsely boast-

ed of as the charter of our religious freedom. It is the language of a philosopher as well as poet,

He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves beside.

But, thus left free to choose, when and where, I would ask, is the truth brought before our rising youth, that they may choose rationally and wisely? Government stands jealously apart from the question of Christian or Infidel among its citizens, as if it had no interest in the decision. Our common schools and academies stand apart from it, as if religion were not known and acknowledged to be the corner-stone of a nation's safety. Our colleges in general stand timidly apart from it, as if the youthful mind could grow up to maturity without prejudging that problem. And thus it is, that in the decision of the most vital question to which the mind of man can be called, and one that will be settled by prejudice, if not previously settled by reason, the vagrant mind of our youth is left unguided and unformed—turned adrift into life, a pilotless barque upon a trackless sea, to choose in darkness its own path, and make in ignorance its own chart, and to fight or fall, unarmed, before the open attacks of infidelity, or the secret sappings of vice. O, gentlemen! it is a perilous contest that, which is thus waged in ignorance between “the inner and the outer man;” and looking merely to its temporal penalty, may well awaken fears for the

future destinies of our country. "Tyre of the farther West," is the glowing appeal to us of a living Christian poet—

"Tyre of the farther West"—be thou too warned,
 Whose eagle wings thine own green world o'erspread,
 Touching two oceans : wherefore hast thou scorned
 Thy father's God, O proud and full of bread ?

Why lies the cross unhonoured on thy ground,
 While in mid-air thy stars and arrows flaunt ?
 That sheaf of darts, will it not fall unbound,
 Except disrobed of thy vain earthly vaunt,
 Thou bring it to be blest where saints and angels haunt ?

* * * * *

Oh ! while thou yet hast room, fair fruitful land,
 Ere war and want have stained thy virgin sod,
 Mark thee a place on high, a glorious stand,
 Whence truth her sign may make o'er forest, lake and
 strand.*

But, to turn our foreboding thoughts from the future : what, I would ask, is the actual result of this system upon our educated citizens ? *Sincere* Christians we have many, for the *heart* makes them ; but the *well instructed* Christian—he, I mean, who can render a reason of the faith that is in him, and confute the infidel upon his own ground of philosophy or ill-studied science, is of rare occurrence among the laity of our country. Nor only so—the evil were less alarming if such ignorance were not justified ; but it is. Theology is, with us, falsely set

* *Lyra apostolica*, sig. y.

apart as a purely professional study, and all intermixture in education deprecated of religious with scientific truth. But upon what principle does this unholy separation rest? Why should that knowledge, which equally concerns all, be limited to the acquisitions of a few? Why should not a liberal education bring the question of Christianity, as it does other questions of evidence, to the bar of rational inquiry, in order that when once examined, approved and received, it may thenceforth be held knowingly, and without doubt or wavering. Why should religion be made to stand aloof from that true philosophy of which it is the head and crown? Why should revelation fear to enter the halls of science, as if knowledge were an enemy instead of an ally? Why should the Christian be taught to tremble at discoveries into the secrets of nature, as if the God of nature was not the same with the God of mercy: as if the works of God's hands could, by any possibility, contradict the revelation of his will? There is something, gentlemen, radically false in a system of education that leads to such opinions. It is, in the truth, the very scheme of the apostate Julian, who forbade Christians the schools of philosophy, in order that he might divorce faith from knowledge, and cast it into the lap of ignorance and fanaticism—well knowing that the mind of man can, in the long run, follow no other guide than reason.

To suppose that reason *can* be opposed to reve-

lation, is the very corner stone of infidelity. There is, on this point, but one great and eternal principle. All truth is ONE, and, come from what source it may, can never be at variance with itself. As with the rays of solar light, so with those of truth. However bent or reflected, they are traceable back to one centre; however coloured, they are still but elements of one primitive, pure beam. With our limited powers of vision, we see truth but in fragments, and to them give the name of varied sciences: but could we, from some loftier stand, take them all in at one comprehensive glance, we should see them to be but parts of one great science—but radii of one circle, of which nature is the circumference, and God the centre.

Now, Theology is the study that elevates the thoughts to that higher sphere, traces that connection, and converges those scattered rays, until it brings forth from them, by the alchymy of a true philosophy, spiritual heat and light; directing the one upon man's heart, to inflame it with love and gratitude, and the other upon his path in life, to enlighten, to guide and to cheer him. Faith, resting on this principle, could have no fears from knowledge, and education, conducted upon it, would leave no room for doubt. The Christian revelation would then become to our instructed youth like other settled truths, "part and parcel" of their minds,

"———truths that wake
To perish never."

and infidelity be to them but one of the manifold errors of ignorance.

To the obvious objection against such an endowment in our college, that differences of Christian faith among the alumni forbid the requisite union, the answer is as obvious, that the object proposed is the *establishment* of the Bible, and not its *interpretation*; and as that is common ground to all Christians, so may it be made a common interest. To establish the rock on which all rest, cannot surely be thought to undermine any. In a matter, too, of such vital importance, it surely were ill reasoning, to refuse to do any thing, because we cannot do all. In youth, the seed must be sown; in youth, the foundation must be laid: other hands than ours may reap the harvest, other workmen erect the superstructure, but still we must do our part, or the harvest will, in all likelihood, be one of tares, and the structure one not founded on a rock. Let us remember, too, that vice and infidelity will be at work in fixing the principles of our youth, if religion is not; their restless spirits will not lie idle. It is a teeming soil, which will shoot up with weeds, if not set with wholesome plants. Of the neglect of other sciences, the only penalty may be ignorance—of religion it is not ignorance, but unbelief. Principles of action the mind *must* have, be they right or wrong. The mystic volume of nature it *will* interpret blindly or wisely, and, left to its own dark musings, may spell out atheism, mate-

rialism, or infidelity, instead of a God of infinite wisdom, power, goodness and mercy. Nor is it here only that their danger lies. Without the lights of a true Theology, no academic study but has its dangers. Devoid of it, the astronomer loses God in the infinite—the experimentalist in the atom: the geologist finds infidelity in rocks; and the antiquarian, in heathen temples. Even classical and moral studies become a snare, and the lofty aspirations of Plato, the noble ethics of Cicero, and the half Christian teaching of Seneca, are made to cast into the shade man's need of revelation, and to sanctify, as it were, the cause of infidelity, by clothing it in feelings of admiration for all that is lofty, and pure, and eloquent, in heathen wisdom. Now, a true Theology reconciles these jarring conclusions, reclaims these floating wrecks of paradise,—“*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*,”—and under the guidance of revelation, reconstructs the broken ark of man's safety; showing, in the words of Locke, “reason to be natural revelation, and revelation superhuman reason.” How, then, shall we not acknowledge Theology as a necessary link in every scheme of liberal education, or rather, as its binding circle, which holds together the otherwise loose elements, and gives them strength and value: its golden thread, I may say, which, pervading every study, weaves into one harmonious tissue the varied web of science, fitting it, if I may use such a phrase, to

be a royal robe to the soul of man, that lord and priest of nature, that redeemed inheritor of the sky.

But there is a further and closing consideration, that brings the subject of the "Evidences" not only within the general limits of education, but specifically within the walls of a college. The truth of the Bible is a question of evidence cumulative : not only does its testimony come from every quarter of human knowledge, but it grows and advances with it. It stands, therefore, among the sciences of progressive discovery : day by day its limits are enlarging ; its materials accumulating, and its arguments strengthening. There is no science but brings tribute to it, no branch of learning but bears fruit for it, no discovery, whether of ancient or modern research, but throws some new light upon it. The astronomer, as he watches in the heavens, nebulae of light centering into suns ; the geologist, as he demonstrates out of organic remains the progressive order of creation ; the naturalist, in detecting the edible grasses growing wild on the mountains of central Asia ; the historian, as he traces up the origin of nations to their common cradle ; the philologist, in following up affiliated languages till at last they stand side by side, alike and yet different, like dissevered rocks which some great organic convulsion of nature had split asunder, leaving an unbridged chasm ; the ancient scholar recovering some lost passage of Berosus, verifying the Mosaic record ; the antiquarian, re-establishing, by means

of a coin, the impeached veracity of St. Paul—all, all bear upon the Bible, and require in the teacher as varied learning, to keep pace with the progress of science, and to collect, arrange and enforce its scattered evidences.

Take but a single instance. Look at the mantle of night as it rises from the land of the pyramids and the Pharaohs. Is no learned hand, think you, required to re-construct the broken temple of that wisdom in which Moses was brought up, and to question that contemporary, but long silent witness, as to the veracity of him who “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter?” In the days of our ignorance, Egypt was the stronghold of the infidel; its temples were his citadel, and its hieroglyphic symbols his prolific armory. “Thirteen thousand years before Christ,” says Volney, “reigned the second race of Egyptian kings.” “Long before the Mosaic date of the creation,” says Buckhardt, “was the temple of Esneh built.” “Four thousand years before Christ,” in the language of Dupuis, and a host of other infidel “savans,” “was the zodiac of Denderah constructed.” But now that the enigma of its language is solved, and its monuments read—now that the voiceless mummy hath found a tongue, what answer does the unveiled priestess of Isis give? Even her first lisps were of the truths of the Bible; her broken murmurs have been of the veracity of Moses, and under her guidance, infidelity has already descended into the tomb of the Pharaohs, and returned believing.

But, thus is it with the advance of all knowledge. Interrogated by ignorance, science has always been infidel. It is the deeper questionings of true reasoning that have placed her as a witness on the side of revelation—her *conjectures* have been for the unbeliever, but her *knowledge* has ever pointed heavenward. Such is the religious history of human science ; clouding itself *to-day* with doubt and difficulties, to be dissipated and explained by the light of its own *to-morrow* discoveries. In the palmy days of French infidelity, eighty scientific conclusions were blazoned forth by its Institute, as convicting Moses of ignorance or falsehood. But where are they now ? Sunk with the glories of the atheistical age that promulgated them, and Deified Reason has again bowed its head in the presence of Him who was the “ meekest ” of men. Nor is it only by the hand of open enemies that such wounds have been attempted to be inflicted. Even professing Christians have acknowledged that, in their scientific researches, “ Moses hung a dead weight upon them,” and have consequently proceeded to explain into oriental allegory or philosophic fable, (*υποθεσις*) whatever in his language refused to tally with their arrogant standard of science. And what has been the result ? Against the language of revelation, no standard has eventually stood—no weapon has finally prospered. Amid the conflicting waves of human opinion, and the varying, though onward advance of the bark of human knowledge,

the Bible still stands forth unshaken, the book, as well as the rock of ages: on a level with man's wants, wherever he is placed, on a level with his knowledge, whatever he knows, with its plain, unpretending narrative, simple to the simplest, learned to the most wise—penned four thousand years ago, yet pregnant with all the discoveries of modern science, and according closer and closer with man's knowledge, the further he advances in the secrets of nature.

Now, for what end is it, we may justly reason, that the evidences of our faith have been thus attached, by a wise and benevolent providence, to "the restless car of human endeavour;" for what, but to make that great charter of our faith man's intellectual companion throughout the whole of his destined progress; that in whatever mine he delve of human knowledge, he should ever be bringing forth something to remind him of his higher destinies. It has been in order that man may never put asunder what God hath joined, the exercise of faith and the exercise of intellect, that learning might ever be the friend of religion, and philosophy its handmaiden, and the sciences its consecrated daughters, priestesses, I should rather say, in the great temple of nature, to bear incense unto the altar, and to speak forth the glory of THE HIGH AND UNCREATED ONE, who reigns within it.

Thus it is, gentlemen, that education can alone be sanctified, and the mind of our youth aroused

by its holiest stimulus into its most abiding strength.
Let, then, our exhortation to them be,

*Τεκνον δοξε
Βεβα κρατειν μεν ξυν Θεω δ' αει κρατειν.**

To place Columbia College on this high, as well as holy ground, by an adequate endowment for religious instruction, and thereby to make it one of the guardians of that living temple which is the true palladium of our national liberties—this, gentlemen alumni, were a worthy and a noble deed, coming from any hands; but from yours—from those of her sons—those who in youth have drawn from her breasts the nourishment of life, this were a boon such as grateful children can alone bestow, and a grateful mother alone can estimate.

* Ajax Fligel, l. 775.

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